

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10
IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07
SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-15 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05
H-01 PA-01 ICA-11 /141 W
-----067752 100647Z /16

R 100615Z APR 78
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0361
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0949

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CH US
SUBJ: PEKING'S REACTION TO DEFERRAL OF NEUTRON BOMB PRODUCTION

1. SUMMARY. PEKING HAS IMPLICITLY CHARACTERIZED PRESIDENT'S
DECISION TO DEFER PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON BOMB AS SUBMISSION
TO SOVIET BLACKMAIL. END SUMMARY.

2. PEKING HAS REACTED UNUSUALLY QUICKLY TO PRESIDENT'S
ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 7 THAT PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS
WOULD BE DEFERRED. THE NEWS WAS REPORTED IN AN APRIL 8
HSINHUA ARTICLE, WHICH WAS REPRINTED BY PEOPLE'S DAILY
APRIL 10 AND EXCERPTED ON THE CENTRAL RADIO NEWS SAME DAY.

3. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENTARY AS YET ON
THE DECISION, THE ARTICLE HAS LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT THE
PRC'S UNHAPPINESS. AFTER REPORTING THE DECISION ITSELF,
THE ARTICLE DESCRIBES THE SOVIET UNIONS' CAMPAIGN
OF "THREATS AND BLACKMAIL" AGAINST THE WEAPON. WEST
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GERMAN CDU POLITICIAN MANFRED WOERNER IS QUOTED
APPEALING TO THE WEST NOT TO YIELD TO SOVIET BLACKMAIL
ON THE QUESTION. IN THE SAME VEIN, HSINHUA CITES US
PRESS REPORTS THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION RAN
COUNTER TO THE ADVICE OF "MOST OF HIS TOP FOREIGN
POLICY ADVISERS" AND "EVOKED STRONG REACTIONS" IN
THE US AND WESTERN EUROPE. STATEMENTS FROM SENATORS

BAKER, BYRD, AND BARTLETT ARE CITED, AS ARE THOSE FROM FORMER PRESIDENT FORD, FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS, AND "LE MONDE." ALL VIEW THE DECISION AS A MISTAKE. THE SOLE SUPPORTING VOICE IS THAT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED SOVIET UN OFFICIAL, WHO REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE DECISION MAY ENABLE BREZHNEV TO ATTEND THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT.

4. THE PRC REACTION IS NOT SURPRISING. AS EARLY AS LAST SUMMER PEKING APPEARED TO VIEW THE NEUTRON BOMB AS A SYMBOL OF US STAUNCHNESS IN OPPOSING SOVIET EXPANSIONISM (SEE 77 PEKING 1727), AND COULD BE EXPECTED TO REACT WITH DISFAVOR TO ANY DECISION NOT TO USE IT. WE WILL NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE NEUTRON BOMB DECISION BEGINS TO CROP UP IN THE STANDARD CHINESE LITANY OF AMERICAN "APPEASEMENT," ALONG WITH THE "SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE" AND PRM 10. WOODCOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PEKING00949
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780153-0911
Format: TEL
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780474/aaaacly.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6f6920b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3020659
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PEKING'S REACTION TO DEFERRAL OF NEUTRON BOMB PRODUCTION
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, CH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6f6920b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014